



Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Geography:

Map the Mississippi Watershed

Instructions for students:

Use the map template "The Mississippi River and Watershed" and other resources to complete the following. Use another sheet for your answers.

1. On the lower right corner of your map place an arrow that indicates which direction is north on the map. Put a capital "N" at the tip of the arrow. Add the letters S, E & W around the arrow to indicate the directions south, east and west.
2. Using a light green pencil, carefully outline the Mississippi Watershed on your map by following the dashed lines. Write "watershed boundary" neatly along this line.
3. Using a light blue pencil, carefully highlight the Mississippi River; neatly label it.
4. Where does the Mississippi River begin? Mark that place with a blue dot.
5. Place a red dot on your map where the Twin Cities are located.
6. Highlight the Minnesota River with a light yellow pencil, highlight the Missouri River with light brown, and the Ohio River in orange. Label each river.
7. Using other colors, neatly highlight at least two other rivers on the map that are tributaries to the Mississippi; label each river.
8. At what city does the Missouri River meet the Mississippi River? Mark that place with a pink dot on your map.
9. Make a "key" on your map to indicate what each colored line or dot represents.
10. Lay a string along the river, following all the river's curves; cut or mark the string to the length of the river. Use the scale of miles at the bottom of the map to find the approximate length of the Mississippi River.
11. Generally, which direction does the Mississippi flow?
12. Label the body of water that the Mississippi River flows into on your map.
13. What tributary (stream or river) of the Mississippi River is your school closest to?
14. Name the states that have land along the Mississippi River. Write their two-letter postal code abbreviations (like "MN") on each of those states on the map.

15. Use a pencil to darken the state boundary lines inside the Mississippi Watershed area. How many states do you count that contribute water into the Mississippi River?
16. Two Canadian provinces drain water into the Mississippi River. What are the names of these provinces?

Map the Mississippi Watershed! Teacher Notes:

2. The Mississippi Watershed is all the land area that drains into the Mississippi River. On the map the watershed (or "basin") boundary is indicated by the dashed line that encircles all Mississippi River tributaries.
4. By definition the Mississippi River starts at Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota. However, it can also be said that the Mississippi River starts wherever rain or snow falls in the Mississippi Watershed, because water that flows from land anywhere in the watershed will eventually flow into the Mississippi River. (This is a good point for discussion.)
8. St. Louis
10. The length of the Mississippi River is approximately 2,350 miles. Student estimates will tend to be low using this method of measurement because it is impossible for them to follow all the river's curves, many of which do not show up on this scale of map.
11. Southward
12. Gulf of Mexico
13. Answers will vary with the school. Find the stream or river closest to your school that flows to the Mississippi River. Tell students that water running in your street flows to the river or a tributary of the river, too! In the Twin Cities area, all surface water flows to the Mississippi River.
14. Ten states border or include the Mississippi. They are: Minnesota (MN), Wisconsin (WI), Iowa (IA), Illinois (IL), Missouri (MO), Kentucky (KY), Tennessee (TN), Arkansas (AR), Mississippi (MS), Louisiana (LA).
15. There are 31 states whose waters drain to the Mississippi. From this map, it is difficult to count more than 29. The 31 states are: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming, Wisconsin
16. Alberta and Saskatchewan

Big River Journey Classroom Activity: Geography
Map the River in the Twin Cities!

Instructions for students:

Use the map template "Mississippi River: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota" and other maps and resources to create your own map of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities.

1. Complete the compass rose beneath the map title by writing "N" for north, "S" for south, "E" for east, and "W" for west.
2. Use city maps to locate where the Interstate 94 and Interstate 35E highways cross the river, and draw the bridges onto your map.
3. Locate and draw the Hennepin Ave. bridge, Lake St. bridge, Smith Ave. "High Bridge," and the Highway 52 ("Lafayette") bridge on your map.
4. Locate and label downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul on your map.
5. Indicate the location of Historic Fort Snelling with an orange star, and label it.
6. Locate and label the Minnesota River and Minnehaha Creek on your map. Draw a line across Minnehaha Creek where Minnehaha Falls is, and label it.
7. Locate and label Nicollet Island and Pike Island. Color them light green.
8. Locate and draw in St. Anthony Falls; label it.
9. Draw a line across the river where Lock and Dam #1 ("Ford Dam") is located; label it.
10. If your school and/or your home can be located on the map, mark them with a red star (school) and a blue star (home), and label them "school" and "home."
11. Use a map of Mississippi River canoe routes to locate boat access locations and canoe campsites. Mark them on your map.
12. Locate at least four more historic or modern river features and label them on your map. Some possibilities include Mounds Park, Fountain Cave, Carver Cave, Kaposia, Crosby Lake, Pickerel Lake, Fort Snelling State Park, Minnehaha Park, Boom Island Park, Hidden Falls Park, railroad bridges, historic mills, etc.
13. Color the rivers, lakes and streams light blue.

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, 2001.